

## Goa & Karnataka

### A Greentours Itinerary

Regarded as one of the eight greatest hot spots of biodiversity in the World, the Western Ghats is a narrow range of hills and low mountains that separates the Arabian Sea from the Deccan Plateau for almost a thousand kilometres along the western edge of the Subcontinent. The hills intercept the moisture laden air blown off the Arabian Sea by the trade winds and the Ghats get a drenching – the monsoon! This summer phenomenon is what makes the Ghatian forests so lush and goes part of the way to explaining the incredible biodiversity. So much flora and fauna along the length of the chain is found nowhere else in the world.

#### Day 1

##### Arrive Mumbai

We'll arrive late in the evening into Mumbai and transfer to a very good hotel close to the airport.

#### Days 2 – 4

##### Goa: The Succoro Plateau, Carambolim Lake, River Zuari, Morjim Beach, Siolim Marshes & Divar Island

A morning flight takes us north to one of India's smallest states, but perhaps one of the better known. Goa became rather a hotbed of tourism for a couple of decades and still continues to attract Europeans seeking sun and beaches. Yet it has still managed to maintain its truly unique appeal. Both the architecture and the cuisine are Indian but with more than a hint of Portuguese. The state sits a little more than half way up the Western Ghats with those low mountains forming the inland bulwark with verdant countryside descending to the Arabian Sea.

Many of the commonest of Ghatian butterflies are some of the prettiest. In the garden of our hotel we'll see the colourful Pansies – not flowers at all, but instead butterflies of lovely colour and pattern – Blue, Yellow and Peacock Pansies, as well as Lemon, Chocolate and Grey Pansies. And then there's the gorgeous Common Jezebel and the impressively large Great Orange-tip. Swallowtails are numerous and varied in Goa and two of the commonest of the state's butterflies are the black, red and white swallowtails - Common Rose and Crimson Rose. However these are soon eclipsed by the marvellous shimmering blue-green Malabar-banded Peacock. More shimmering elegance can be seen in the Common Blue bottle too. The paddyfields, rivers, beaches and marshes of coastal Goa have much to offer with a great variety of waders, terns, gulls, egrets and herons and we'll see Collared Kingfisher, Black-capped Kingfisher and the impressive Stork-billed Kingfisher too. Distinctive low coastal forest is a rare habitat now but still provides shelter for Grey-headed Bulbul, White-browed Bulbul, the gorgeous Orange-headed Thrush and lovely Vigor's

Sunbird, as well as butterflies such as the distinctive and beautiful Red Pierrot. On the Succoro Plateau we'll look for Red Spurfowl, Jungle Myna and Crimson-backed Sunbird. These dry areas are home to the lovely Common Silverline, and both Angled Pierrot and Common Pierrot.

Purple Herons and Grey Herons spear the abundant frogs in the wetland at Carambolim. River Terns and Whiskered Terns hawk across the waters thoroughly outnumbered by the abundant Odonata. Various *Orthetrum* and *Trithemis* are common and we'll also see lovely *Rhyothemis* and *Tramea* species too. Purple Swampheens are common and we'll see both Glossy and Black-headed Ibis as well as quite a range of waders. Brown Hawk Owl and Jungle Owlet are in the surrounding trees. *Danaids* are frequent among them the Blue Tiger, Dark Blue Tiger and Glassy Tiger. A little dark velvety butterfly is the Black Prince and here we may see the Plum Judy. Indian Sunbeams are well-named. Innocuous with the wings closed when they fly they flash brilliant orange. There are other beautiful 'blues' here too such as the elegant Yamfly and the complicated Monkey Puzzle.

We'll take a boat trip to a sandbar to get close to a range of gulls including Brown-headed Gull, Steppe Gull, Pallas's Gull and Slender-billed Gull in the estuary at Morjim. We'll also likely see Caspian Tern, Lesser Crested Tern and Greater Crested Tern. Small Salmon Arabs flutter along the beach where we'll likely also see the Lime Butterfly and the Angled Castor. Both Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers are frequent visitors to this spot and overhead are Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea Eagle. There still remains relatively undisturbed grassland habitat on Diwar Island in the River Mandovi where we can find Malabar Lark, Red-headed Bunting, Rufous-tailed Lark and Pallid Harrier.

## **Days 5 – 8(am)**

### **Goa: Bhagwan Mahavir & Bondla Wildlife Sanctuaries**

Forest Calotes and Flying Lizards inhabit the moist deciduous forests typical of inland Goa. Here are some truly lovely birds such as Indian Pitta, Malabar Trogon, Flame-throated Bulbul and Crimson-backed Sunbird. There's Asian Fairy Bluebird, White-bellied Blue Flycatcher, Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher, and the gorgeous Heart-spotted Woodpecker too. Butterflies are myriad, the magnificent Great Orange-Tip, Autumn Leaf and the fabulous Blue Oakleaf amongst them. Strong-flying Clippers and Cruisers are a tremendous sight. Many of the nymphalids have English names redolent of the colonial period when some of the British officers spent more time waving their butterfly nets about rather than their guns! There's the Staff Sergeant, the Baron, the Blue Baron, the Commander, the Gaudy Baron, the Grey Count, and the beautiful Red-spot Duke amongst a host of similarly named lepidoptera!

Inside the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary we'll visit an area known for Sri Lanka Frogmouth. We'll likely encounter Grey-fronted Green Pigeon, Mountain Hawk Eagle and the regional endemic Malabar Whistling Thrush. Malabar Wood-shrike and

Malabar Parakeet are both relatively easy to see here. Forest Wagtail, Western Crowned Warbler and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch are typical forest species in Bhagwan. Jerdon's Nightjar is found close to our hotel and so too the impressive Brown Fish Owl.

Southern Birdwings are a wonderful sight as they sail through the air as we walk through the mixed deciduous forest of Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary. Almost as large is the improbably delicate Malabar Tree Nymph. Large Oakblues are indeed exceedingly large for blues and we'll also look for the shapely Centaur Oakblue. The Apefly is an unusual little butterfly with carnivorous caterpillars! The smart Common Nawab comes to mud-puddle by the streams alongside Common Gulls and both Dark Wanderer and Common Wanderer. Amongst several skippers is the powerful Common Banded Awl. Blue Mormon's offer a hint of red and blue as they flap lazily by, and other swallowtails include Tailed Jay, Common Mime and Red Helen. Psyche flutters ghost-like in the shade. White-cheeked Barbets are common and we'll hear the lovely song of White-rumped Shama. Sky-blue Black-naped Monarch sally after flies from fig trees where we'll see Black-naped Orioles feeding. Crested Hawk-eagle's shrill calls echo over the forest and nearer at hand we'll see Crested Goshawk and Besra.

### **Day 8(pm) – 11(am)**

#### **Karnataka: Ganeshgudi & Anshi Wildlife Sanctuary**

The land around our accommodation, the Old Magazine House, Ganeshgudi, lies between the huge Supa reservoir and the forested hills to the east and is full of birds. It has become famous of late as a great place to photograph birds and indeed the Old Magazine House now boasts hides to facilitate bird photography. Well over 250 species have been recorded just here and most of the Ghatian specialities can be seen. Red Spurfowl and Indian Peafowl strut through the photography area as we admire Banded Bay Cuckoo, Crested Tree Swift, Malabar Trogon and both Malabar Pied Hornbill and Malabar Grey Hornbill. Attracted into the arena are Dark-fronted Babbler and Puff-throated Babbler, Indian Yellow Tit and Orange-headed Ground Thrush, Flame-throated Bulbul and Blue-capped Rock Thrush, Emerald Dove and fabulous white forms of the Indian Paradise Flycatcher. Flycatchers include White-bellied Blue, Tickell's and Black-naped Monarch. We'll see Little Spiderhunter, Jerdon's Leafbird, Malabar White-headed Staring, Malabar Barbet, Nilgiri Flowerpecker, Malabar Barbet and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo.

Every day Malabar Pied Hornbills gather to dust bathe at the Dandeli Timber Depot and in addition we'll be able to see White-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch and Lesser Yellownappe here.

We'll visit Anashi National Park, one of India's most beautiful protected areas, with deep valleys, steep hills, and rich wet evergreen and semi-evergreen forests. The birdlife is similar to Ganeshgudi but the area is much less disturbed and so contains a rich mammal fauna including Tiger, Leopard and Dhole. However the thick forest

makes seeing such predators very unlikely, though we've a decent chance of coming across Gaur, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Barking Deer and Wild Boar. King Cobra is a common snake here though again hard to see – we'll likely have better luck with Common Langur, Bonnet Macaque and Malabar Giant Squirrel. We've a good chance though spotting Common Leopard – the butterfly that is! Others likely here are Rustic, Commander, Common Lascar, Common Sailer and both Great Eggfly and Daniad Eggfly. Both White Orange-tip and Yellow Orange-tip are common and we've a chance of the well-named Crimson-tip. Tamil Yeoman gather in groups to mud-puddle and we'll also see Bamboo Treebrown, Blue Admiral, Club Beak and Blue King-crow.

### **Day 11(pm) – 14(am)** **Karnataka: Hampi**

Karnataka has received relatively little attention over the years compared with Kerala to the south, yet it has some fabulous sanctuaries protecting some of the finest wildlife in western India. And it has some truly amazing cultural sites including the Vijaya Vittala Temple where legend has it that the famed Musical Pillars and the Stone Chariot were built for Lord Vishnu himself. This is one of the largest open-air museum complexes in the world, a testament to the glory of the Vijayanagara Empire which was at its height in the 13th and 14th centuries. Impossibly delicate Tree Nymphs float about shaded nullahs sheltering White-bellied Tree Pie, Lesser Yellownappe and Blue-eared Kingfisher. Here are some truly gorgeous swallowtails such as the Red Helen and the shimmering blue-green Paris Peacock. Southern Birdwings are a spectacular sight and there's some beautiful forest lycaenids such as Peacock Royal, Common Tinsel, Fluffy Tit, and the Common Red Flash. Hampi is perhaps the easiest protected area in India to see the Sloth Bear. There's an abundance of great birds too including Painted Spurfowl, Sirkeer Malkoha, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Red Munia, and the weird Red-naped Ibis. There's a rich mammal fauna in the area and we'll hope to see Gaur, Stripe-necked Mongoose, Small Indian Civet, Slender Loris (at night) and Jungle Cat, and sightings of Leopard are possible too.

Who would not want to see a Southern Duffer? Restricted Demon and Giant Redeye are must sees too! The English names of Indian butterflies are a constant source of banter. Amongst those forest lycaenids are yet more gorgeous species such as White Royal, Common Imperial, Slate Flash and the Cornelian. Two special swallowtails visit the water's edge in Hampi, the Spot Swordtail and the Fivebar Swordtail, and we've a chance of the endemic Malabar Rose here too. Two large and sublimely patterned nymphalids have names that allude very well to their flight patterns – the Cruiser and the Clipper. There are some strikingly marked members of this family in Hampi's forests - Redspot Duke, Gaudy Baron, Baronet, Staff Sergeant and Colour Sergeant among them. Fast-flying Tawny Rajah stops if it finds some carnivore dung. Painted Sawtooths and the gorgeous Blue Nawab too. One of India's most lovely butterflies is the Tamil Lacewing, its wings covered in a delicate tracery of orange, black and white. More

prosaic are the various Bushbrowns and Fiverings, and for those that like an identification challenge the many Ceruleans and Lineblues. We'll be on the lookout for the Common Map, the Joker, Black Rajah and the Painted Courtesan. Hiding on the forest floor is the South Indian Blue Oakleaf, a large butterfly that will wow us if it opens its wings to reveal the fabulous powder blue-green uppers. Other beauties we hope to see include Shiva's Sunbeam, Toothed Sunbeam, the Many-tailed Oakblue and Rosy Oakblue.

We'll also take in the Sasvikalu Ganesha and the Virupaksha temple and there's more good birding in the dry country around where we can find Eurasian Eagle Owl, Jungle Bush Quail, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Grey Francolin and Streak-throated swallow.

**Day 14(pm)**  
**Flight to Mumbai**

**Day 15**  
**Departure**

If you would like to ask about any other aspect of this holiday, please call 01298 83563 or email us at [enquiries@greentours.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@greentours.co.uk)

To Book a on this Holiday please fill in the booking form which you can download from [www.greentours.co.uk](http://www.greentours.co.uk) (also found in the Greentours brochure) and post to Greentours, 8 Eliot Close, Armitage, Rugeley, WS15 4UP, UK. Tel +44 (0)1298 83563. After booking your place you'll receive a confirmation letter and a detailed information pack will be dispatched twelve weeks prior to departure. Flower, butterfly and bird checklists are available.